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**UNITED STATES TO CONTRIBUTE \$1 MILLION TO WTO TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE FUND BENEFITTING DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

The United States will contribute \$1 million to the WTO to help finance technical assistance activities to benefit developing countries, U.S. Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick announced today. The voluntary contribution, to help developing countries meet their Uruguay Round commitments and participate more fully in the international trading system, will be provided to the WTO's Global Trust Fund for Technical Assistance.

"This money will provide trade officials from developing nations with new technological tools as well as specialized seminars and workshops offered by WTO officials," said Ambassador Zoellick. "By helping developing nations advance through trade, we all benefit."

A portion of the U.S. contribution, \$100,000, is to be used for workshops and other programs organized by the WTO Secretariat for non-governmental organizations from developing countries.

Background

The WTO technical assistance program is handled by the WTO Secretariat staff, with oversight by the Members, through the WTO Committee on Trade and Development. Staff costs are generally covered by the regular WTO budget (about 20% of which goes to technical assistance), but the variable expenses of technical assistance programs (for facilities, interpretation, special training modules, contractors and non-Secretariat travel) are dependent on donations of individual governments to the Global Trust Fund.

WTO Guidelines adopted in 1996 task the Secretariat with "playing a more active role in its direct contacts with NGOs" through various means, such as symposia on specific WTO-related issues and other means of sharing information. The WTO Secretariat is planning several programs for NGOs from developing countries in the run-up to the WTO's 4th Ministerial Conference in November.

The \$1 million contribution was provided in the appropriations for the State Department Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs Act, FY 2001 (P.L. 106-429). Last year, the United States provided \$650,000 to the WTO for trade policy courses in sub-Saharan Africa and computer-based training modules on WTO Agreements in the WTO reference centers in Sub-Saharan Africa.

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